

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gaming apparatus, comprising:
  - 5 a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
  - a user input device;
  - a value input device; and
  - 10 a controller operatively coupled to said display unit, said user input device, and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,  
said controller being programmed to receive a player selected game option from said user input device, the player selected game option being indicative of only one of a first win evaluation method and a second win evaluation method, the first win evaluation method being different than the second win evaluation method, the first win evaluation method being a three-dimensional win evaluation method,  
said controller being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,  
said controller being programmed to cause a three-dimensional video image to be generated on said display unit, said three-dimensional video image representing a casino game,  
said controller being programmed to perform the first win evaluation method to determine a value payout associated with an outcome of said casino game if the player selected game option is indicative of the first win evaluation method.
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2. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to select a pay table from a plurality of pay tables based on said player selected game option.

3. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to select a reel strip layout from a plurality of reel strip layouts based on said player selected game option.

5 4. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to generate a transparent overlay on the display unit, the transparent overlay being indicative of the player selected game option.

10 5. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 4 wherein the transparent overlay is positioned on the display unit via the user input device by dragging a graphical selector.

15 6. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 5 wherein the graphical selector transparently covers a single video slot machine reel position.

7. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 5 wherein the graphical selector transparently covers an entire video slot machine reel.

20 8. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to generate a first video slot machine symbol within a second video slot machine symbol on the display unit.

25 9. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first win evaluation method comprises combining a plurality of individual layer evaluations.

10. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first win evaluation method comprises an n-kind extension method.

30 11. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first win evaluation method comprises a "Z" layer interaction method.

12. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first win evaluation method comprises an extended progressive win evaluation method.

5 13. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to determine the outcome of said casino game based on a number of play layers selected by a player via the user input device.

14. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to check said player selected game option for allowability.

10 15. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller is programmed to check for availability of sufficient credits for the player selected game option.

15 16. A gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming apparatuses as defined in claim 1, said gaming apparatuses being interconnected to form a network of gaming apparatuses.

20 17. A gaming system as defined in claim 16, wherein said gaming apparatuses are interconnected via the Internet.

25 18. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said three-dimensional video image represents a game selected from the group of games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo, said video image comprising an image of at least five playing cards if said game comprises video poker,

said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said game comprises video slots,

30 said video image comprising an image of a plurality of playing cards if said game comprises video blackjack,

10 said video image comprising an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said game comprises video keno,

15 said video image comprising an image of a bingo grid if said game comprises video bingo.

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10 19. A gaming apparatus, comprising:

15 a display unit that is capable of generating video images;

20 a user input device;

25 a value input device; and

30 a controller operatively coupled to said display unit, said user input device, and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

35 said controller being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,

40 said controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image comprising a plurality of simulated slot machine reels of a slots game, each of said slot machine reels having a plurality of slot machine symbols, the plurality of slot machine symbols including a first slot machine symbol and a second slot machine symbol, at least a portion of the first slot machine symbol being depicted in a first geometric plane, at least a portion of the second slot machine symbol being depicted in a second geometric plane, the first geometric plane being different than the second geometric plane,

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50 25 said controller being programmed to determine a value payout associated with an outcome of said slots game based on a configuration of said simulated slot machine reels.

20. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 19 wherein said controller is programmed to allow a user to make a payline selection.

5 21. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 20 wherein said controller is programmed to allow a user to make a three-dimensional payline selection.

22. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 19 wherein said controller is programmed to generate a transparent overlay on the display unit, the transparent overlay being indicative of at least one three dimensional game option.

10 23. A gaming apparatus as defined in claim 22 wherein the transparent overlay is positioned on the display unit via the user input device by dragging the transparent overlay over a slot machine symbol from the plurality of slot machine symbols.

15 24. A memory having a computer program stored therein, said computer program being capable of being used in connection with a casino gaming apparatus, said memory comprising:

20 a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to allow a person to make a wager;

25 a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to cause a video image to be generated on a display unit, said video image representing a video slots game, said video image comprising an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels in a plurality of geographic dimensions, each simulated slot machine reel comprising a plurality of slot machine symbols; and

30 a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to

determine a value payout of said casino game represented by said video image.

5        25. A memory as defined in claim 24 wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to select a pay table from a plurality of pay tables based on a player selected three dimensional game option.

10        26. A memory as defined in claim 24 wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to select a reel strip layout from a plurality of reel strip layouts based on a player selected three dimensional game option.

15        27. A memory as defined in claim 24 wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to generate a transparent overlay on the display unit, the transparent overlay being indicative of a 20 player selected three dimensional game option.

25        28. A memory as defined in claim 32 wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to perform a three dimensional win evaluation method.

30        29. A memory as defined in claim 28 wherein the fourth memory portion is physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the gaming apparatus to perform a three dimensional win evaluation method selected from a group of three dimensional win evaluation methods

consisting of combining individual layers, n-kind extension, "Z" layer interaction, and extended progressive.